

*The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 23 October 2022. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.*

## The Lineage of the King

### Matthew 1:4-5

Every week, in rain or shine, in cold or in heat, a small group of faithful folk from this church goes out onto the streets of Athlone to hand out Gospel tracts; to engage people in conversations about the Lord; and to sing hymns, and preach the message of salvation. Sometimes we get angry reactions from people. Most of the time, people respond with indifference. However, there are times when people express appreciation for what we are doing, and say some encouraging words. A few weeks ago, we heard some encouraging words; but this time, it came from a surprising source! As our men were handing out tracts, and as I was preaching, some friends of one of our men stopped to chat with him; and as they were talking, their three-year-old girl was listening to the preaching. After a while, this little girl turned to her nanna, pointed in my direction, and said, “Nanna, that man is God’s friend!”

Now, I must say that when I heard about what this little girl had said, it brought a smile to my face. However, it also caused me to do so soul-searching. You see, it is not a light thing to be called “God’s friend.” There is one man that we know of in the Bible who was called “the friend of God”; and that man was Abraham. In **2 Chronicles 20** and **Isaiah 41**, God states that Abraham was His “*friend*”; and in **James 2**, James reminds us that “*Abraham...was called the friend of God.*” As I thought about what it takes to have such a close relationship with God that He would unashamedly call you His “friend,” it made me wonder: “Do I *deserve* to be called ‘God’s friend’?” The only honest answer I could come up with was, “No. I don’t deserve that honour!” You know what, though? Abraham didn’t deserve to be called God’s friend, either! He was a sinner, just like you and me. Yet, he was a sinner who was saved by God’s grace; and he had a very close walk with God, and intimate trust in Him. That is why God chose him to be the father of a nation from which His Son, Jesus Christ, would be born.

This brings us to our today’s Scripture. In last week’s message, we began to delve into the book of **Matthew**; and if there is anything you took away from that message, it is that Matthew presents Jesus as the **King of Israel**. Matthew wrote his Gospel to *Jewish people* to prove to them that Jesus is the King of Israel, and the Saviour of the world. The very first sentence of **Matthew** presents both these truths. Matthew says, “*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*” That title, “*the son of David*” is a declaration that Jesus is the King of Israel. That other title, “*the son of Abraham*,” reminds us that Jesus is also the *Saviour of the whole world*.

This morning, we will see how Jesus of Nazareth meets the requirements for the role of King and Saviour. We will also see *what this means* for every one of us. You see, when you are confronted with *Who Jesus is*, you are faced with a crucial question: “What will I do with Jesus? Will I submit my life to Him—or not?” Before this message is over, you will be challenged with this question. For now, though, let’s get into the Scripture. The title of this message is ***The Lineage of the King***.

#### Read Matthew 1:1-16.

#### I. Jesus’ family tree

Here in **chapter 1**, Matthew is presenting us with the lineage of the Lord Jesus Christ. Particularly, he is presenting us with the lineage of Jesus’ *adopted father*, Joseph.

Now, if you are not very familiar with these names, you are about to *become* familiar with them, because in the coming weeks, we will be examining the lives of many of these people. Why spend the time to do this? Because this is much more than a “family tree.” This is a record of God’s power and faithfulness! As we study these people’s lives, we will see how God was there all along, for 4,000 years, silently working behind the scenes, guiding the events in their lives, and protecting them, so that His Son could be born into this world in *exactly* the manner that He had determined before the world began.

The very fact that the Messiah was born in *exactly* the time and way that God had foretold to His prophets is a miracle of unfathomable proportions. All the odds were against it. For one thing, Satan was doing everything in his power to try to exterminate the Messiah’s bloodline, so that He would never be born. For another thing, several of the key women in Jesus’ bloodline were barren (at first); and it appeared that the bloodline of Messiah would simply “die off.” Also, many of Jesus’ ancestors were extremely wicked; and it seemed that they had forfeited their right to be the progenitor of the Messiah. Yet, despite all these obstacles, God’s plan was not derailed. God used these men and women to accomplish His plan of redemption, right on time! Man could never have manipulated it to happen; but *God* brought it to pass!

Now, before we start examining the lives of the people in this lineage, I would like us to examine one other lineage of the Lord Jesus. For sake of time, we won’t read all 76 names in this list; but I do wish to touch on a few important names.

**Read Luke 3:23, 31, 34-38.**

What we are reading here is Jesus’ family line through His mother, Mary. **Matthew** gives us *Joseph’s* lineage; but **Luke** gives us *Mary’s* lineage. In **verse 23**, Luke says that Joseph was “*the son of Heli*.” This **Heli** is Mary’s father. You’ll notice that Luke doesn’t say that Heli *begat* Joseph; he simply says that Joseph was “*the son of Heli*.” Oftentimes in Scripture, a “son in law” is simply called a “son”; and that’s what we see here. Joseph was the “son in law” of Heli; and, as we have seen, Luke traces Heli’s lineage all the way to Adam!

Now, why did *Matthew* not trace Jesus’ lineage all the way back to Adam, as Luke did? Because Matthew and Luke had two different purposes for two different audiences. Luke was proving to his Gentile readers that Jesus is the **Son of Man** (that He truly is a *man*, and not a phantom). However, the Jews in Matthew’s audience didn’t need to be convinced that Jesus is the *Son of man*. They needed to be convinced that He is the **Son of David**—the King of the Jews. Jesus was the Son of David *biologically*, because His mother was a descendant of David. However, Mary was not in the *royal* line of David. She was a descendant of David’s son, Nathan; but Nathan was not in the royal line. David’s son, Solomon, *was* in the royal line; and Joseph was descended from that line. Every king in David’s line, from David to Jechonias, was a direct ancestor of Joseph. What this means is that Jesus received the *blood* of King David, through Mary; but he received the *royal lineage* of David, by adoption! Joseph was Jesus’ *adopted* father; and by legal right, this makes Jesus **the King of Israel**! With this in mind, let’s examine the genealogy of the King!

## II. Abraham—the “friend of God”

(Read **Matthew 1:2** again.) In order to show us that Jesus is the King of Israel, Matthew begins Jesus’ royal lineage with the *father* of Israel—a man named **Abram** (whom God re-named “Abraham”). About 2,100 years before Christ’s birth, God called Abram, and his wife

Sarah, to leave their homeland of Ur of the Chaldees, and to go to a land that God would show them. That land was Canaan. God promised Abram that He would give Canaan to his descendants as an inheritance. He also promised that He would give Abraham a son, and that He would make of him a great nation. He promised that He would bless those who bless his descendants, and curse those who curse his descendants. He also promised that through his seed, all the families of the earth would be blessed. This was an inviolable covenant; and for 4,000 years now, God has *kept* all the promises of that covenant.

### Read Genesis 12:1-3.

My friends, every aspect of God's covenant with Abraham required great *faith* on Abraham's part. The only part of these promises that Abraham ever saw fulfilled in his lifetime was the birth of his son Isaac. Yet, even then, it *appeared*, for more than 24 years, that this promise could never be fulfilled, because Sarah was well past child-bearing age. As the years wore on, Abraham and Sarah's faith began to weaken; and God kept reminding them of His promise. At one point, Abraham asked the Lord if He intended to make Eliezer, the chief steward of his house, his adopted heir; but God said, "***This [man] shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.***" Sarah even tried to "help God out" by allowing Abraham to marry her young maid, Hagar; and through this union, a son named Ishmael was born. However, this was not God's plan, either. Ishmael was *not* the son of promise. Finally, after 24 years, God appeared to Abraham, and assured him, once again, that he *would* have a son, one year to the day; and that is exactly what happened. One year later, Abraham, at the age of 100, and Sarah, at the age of 90, had a son named **Isaac**.

Now, in retrospect, it's easy for us to look back at Abraham's moments of doubt, and to cluck our tongues and say, "O man of little faith; why did you doubt?" However, we already know the end of the story! What would *you* have done if you were in Abraham's or Sarah's shoes? What would *I* have done? Would *we* have continued to cling to God's promise to *any* degree for 25 long years, when it looked absolutely impossible?

Examine your own life. What do *you* do when it appears that that loved one will never believe on Christ, and be saved? Do you give up, and stop praying? In fact, do you stop witnessing to people? Do you begin to miss church, and to serve God "hit and miss," because it seems that God isn't doing anything? **George Müller**, the founder of the Christian orphanage in Bristol, prayed for **50 years** that two of his unsaved friends would be saved, even though it seemed it would never happen. A Christian friend once asked Müller whether he really believed that these men would ever get saved; and Müller responded, "*Do you think God would have kept me praying all these years if He did not intend to save them?*" As it turned out, both these men *did* get saved—one shortly before, and the other shortly after, Müller's death! **William Carey**, the Baptist missionary who took the Gospel to India, laboured for **8 years** before seeing his first convert, Krishna Pal, come to Christ; yet, all that time, his invalid sister **Polly**, back in England, was praying for his work. It was only in the latter stages of his ministry that Carey began to see larger number of converts; yet, the "unsung hero," Polly (who was nearly completely paralysed) prayed for her brother's ministry for **52 years!** Would *you* do this?

Brethren, all God requires is our *heart*. All He asks is that we have a *heart faith* in Him! God blessed Abraham because of his faith; and ultimately, He made Abraham a blessing to the whole world. How so? Because from Abraham's line, Jesus Christ was born; and Jesus brought us the blessing of salvation through His death on the cross for our sins, and His resurrection from the grave. Abraham may not have understood all the "whys" and "wherefores" of the Messiah's mission; but I think he had a pretty good idea of how the plan

of salvation might play out. How did he know this? Because God revealed it to Abraham in a little “drama”; and Abraham himself, and his son Isaac, were the actors in this drama!

### Read Genesis 22:1-18.

This is, without a doubt, the greatest act of faith in Abraham’s life. Abraham *really believed* that God would raise his son back to life, and that they would both come down from the mountain; and because he was willing to offer up his beloved son, God reaffirmed everything that he had been promising him for at least 50 years. He said that **“in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”** This word “*seed*” refers to a *particular male descendant* that would spring from Abraham’s family; and Jesus is that Man. That is what the little “play” on Mount Moriah was all about. It was God’s way of revealing to Abraham *how* his Seed would bring the blessing of salvation to the whole world. In this play, **Abraham** was a picture of God the Father, who willingly gave up His Son Jesus to die for us. **Isaac** was a picture of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who willingly went to the “altar” of the cross, and allowed Himself to be the Sacrifice for our sins. Isaac’s getting up off the altar alive, when he *had* been appointed to death, is a picture of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. The **ram** that went to the altar *in the place of* Isaac is a picture of how Christ became the Substitute for our sins. He died in *our place*, because He loves us, and wants us to be reconciled to Himself.

If you are not sure that you are on your way to Heaven, please listen carefully. The penalty for your sin is eternal death in hell; and **Jesus is your only Hope of escape** from that penalty! He took *your* sins upon Himself on the cross, and paid *your* sin penalty, so that you might be acquitted of all your sin, declared righteous, and set free. Jesus took your sin on Himself; and in exchange, He offers you His imputed righteousness. However, you must choose to receive this gift of salvation, by simply repenting of your sin in your heart, and placing your complete faith in Him. Please don’t put off this decision! Christ will come into your heart *today*, and save you from sin and hell, if you will only ask Him! The Bible says, **“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”**

Christian, what is the state of your friendship with God? Abraham was called “the friend of God”; but what does this mean? Does it mean that he was perfect? Of course not! Abraham failed the Lord many times. What it *does* mean is that he trusted the Lord enough to *obey* Him, and to *teach his family* to love and obey Him. God said of Abraham, **“Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.”** This is the kind of friendship with God that Jesus described in **John 15**.

### Read John 15:13-15.

When you have a *close* friend—someone you *know very* well, and love—you are inclined to reveal your closest secrets to him, aren’t you? My two youngest children love to tell me their little secrets. They put their mouth right up to my ear, cup their hand around my ear, and whisper their secrets to me. That’s their way of showing that they love me. So it is in our friendship with God. If you are saved, you are Jesus’ friend; but *how close* is your friendship with Him? *I* have many friends; but I share my deepest secrets with my *closest* friends. The closer you are to *Christ*—the more you love Him, obey Him, and listen eagerly to His voice—the more He will reveal His heart and mind to you. None of us in this room could even

fathom what it would be like to have a heart-to-heart friendship with an earthly monarch; yet, Jesus, the King of Kings, promises to reveal *His* deep secrets with you, *if* you will draw near to Him!

### III. Isaac—the “only begotten son”

(Read Matthew 1:2.) Isaac was the child of promise; and he was born at just the right time. He couldn’t have been born 25 years earlier, 15 years earlier, or even one year earlier, than he was born. He had to be born at just the right time, because *his great Descendant*, the Lord Jesus Christ, had to be born at just the right time. Galatians 4:4 says, “***But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.***”

Now, what was so special about Isaac? Was it the fact that he was born in his parents’ extreme old age? In part, perhaps. His birth does seem to be a dim foreshadowing of a far greater miracle—the *virgin birth* of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, the thing that made Isaac so special, and so beloved, was his *own personal faith in God*. God was able to use him in a great way because he, just like his father, lived his life by faith. Much like his father, he, too, had to wait 20 years to have a child. To all appearances, Rebekah was barren. Yet, Isaac did not stop praying. He knew that if the Messiah was to come from his line, then God was going to have to intervene; and in time, He did! It was no problem for God to give Isaac a son; but God wanted the ancestor of the Messiah to be a man who knew how to wait on the LORD.

#### Read Genesis 25:19-26.

Abraham had the honour of being called the “*friend of God*”; but Isaac had the honour of being called the “*only begotten son*” of Abraham. No other man, apart from the Lord Jesus, was ever called an “*only begotten son*”! Why did God give Isaac this honour? Because on Mount Moriah, Isaac was a type of Christ Himself, in his willingness to get up on the altar.

By the way, we know that Abraham had other sons. First, he had a son named Ishmael, through Hagar. He also had six sons Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah, through his third wife Keturah, after Sarah’s death. Did these sons trust in Abraham’s God? It appears that at least *some* of them did. Ishmael definitely appears to have been a believer in Jehovah. However, he didn’t have the kind of faith that Isaac had. Isaac’s faith was so strong, that he was literally willing to *get up on an altar* to be a sacrifice to God!

I don’t know about you; but this puts me to shame! The Bible says that we are to present our bodies a “***living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.***” Yet, how much of the time am I *really* up on the altar? How much of the time am I *really* presenting myself to God as a living sacrifice—surrendering *my* will, and *my* ambitions? How often do I obey His voice fully when He calls me to give up this thing, or to make this change in my life, or to go to this place, or to tell this person about Him? How often do I consider it reasonable to do exactly what God commands, without “tweaking” it to conform to my will? Those moments of implicit, unreserved obedience are golden, because they are too few. Brothers, how much of the time are *you*, like Isaac, up on the altar of sacrifice?

Now, Isaac was not perfect. Like his father Abraham, he failed the Lord, too. For example, he lied to the king of Gerar. Instead of trusting God to protect him, he told the king that Rebekah was his sister, for fear that the king might kill him, and take Rebekah. In his old age, he tried, at first, to give the birthright blessing to his favourite son Esau, even though he knew that God had chosen Jacob. Yet, despite his failures, Isaac’s faith stood the test time and time

again. For his entire life of 180 years, Isaac stayed in the land of Canaan, because he believed God's promise that this land was to belong to his descendants. Isaac was a sinner, just like you and me; but he was a sinner whom God moulded and transformed into a willing vessel, so that one day, the King of Israel, and the Saviour of the world, might spring from his roots!

#### IV. Jacob—the “prince with God”

(**Read Matthew 1:2.**) Throughout the Bible, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are mentioned together many times. In fact, God calls Himself “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” about a dozen times. These men are mentioned as a unit because together, they were the patriarchs of the nation of Israel.

Yet, it was *Jacob*, particularly, whom God chose to be the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. **Abraham** had 8 sons; but of those 8 sons, only Isaac was chosen to be the father of God's people. **Isaac** had twin sons; but of the two, only Jacob was chosen to be the father of God's people. In contrast, **Jacob** had 12 sons; and *every one* of them became a father of God's people. In fact, Jacob was the one who gave the nation its very name, “Israel”! God renamed Jacob “Israel”; and his descendants were named after him. That is a high honour!

Yet, of the three patriarchs, Jacob is the one who seemed to be the most unworthy. He placed his personal faith in God at some point early in his life, and he did have a desire to serve God; but at the same time, he was a rascal. His very name means “heel-grabber,” or “supplanter”; and he lived up to that name too well. You know the story: as Rebekah was in labour, and about to give birth to the boys, Baby Jacob grabbed his brother Esau's heel, and tried to pull him back out of the womb, so that he could come out first! Jacob didn't succeed in being the firstborn; but he *did* succeed, years later, in *stealing* the birthright from Esau.

#### **Read Genesis 27:6-37, 41.**

As Esau and Jacob were approaching the age of 75, it seemed that God's plan for the ages was about to be overthrown. God had clearly told Rebekah, before their sons were born, that the elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). In other words, God had chosen Jacob to be the son of promise—the one who would be the father of the “chosen nation,” and the ancestor of the Messiah. Isaac knew this just as well as Rebekah did; yet, somewhere along the line, he lost sight of this revelation from God, because he was blinded by his favouritism toward Esau. Isaac knew very well that Esau was a rebel, who didn't have a real, personal relationship with God; yet, he must have convinced himself that somehow, Esau would eventually repent and turn to God. Now, Rebekah knew better. She had not forgotten what God had told her about the elder serving the younger; and she was determined to make God's plan happen. However, she also had a fleshly motivation. She *personally* loved Jacob more than she loved Esau; and she allowed *her* favouritism to lead her to do something horrible. She urged Jacob to deceive his father into thinking he was Esau, so that *he* would get the blessing. Instead of trusting *God* to work out this problem in his own time and way, she took things into her own hands, and urged Jacob to do the same. This terrible sin caused years of heartache for the family. In his fury, Esau sought to kill Jacob; and Jacob had to flee to his Uncle Laban in Syria for 20 years.

Yet, was God's plan overthrown? No! Without a doubt, Jacob was totally wrong to *steal* the birthright, instead of letting *God* take care of it: yet, God turned the evil around for good. Twenty years later, Jacob took his now large family back to Canaan, in the hope that his brother Esau had finally cooled off. However, as they were approaching the Jordan River, he found out that Esau, who was aware of his approach, was coming toward his family with 400

armed men, to murder them! That was the night when Jacob got very real with God. By the brook Jabbok, he literally wrestled with God in prayer. As he pleaded for God to spare him and his family, and to bless him, the Angel of the LORD (the Son of God Himself) appeared in human form, and *literally* wrestled with Jacob all night! And who won the match? Jacob did! He won...by surrendering! When Jacob finally surrendered his will to God, God blessed him, and re-named him “**Jacob**,” which means “**prince with God**.” As it turned out, God softened Esau’s heart toward Jacob; and the next day, the two brothers were reconciled.

### **Read Genesis 32:6-13, 24-30 / 33:1-4.**

Brethren, we can all identify with Jacob, can’t we? In fact, we can identify with him too well! How often have *you* tried to serve God—but in your *own way*? It doesn’t work! God demands *full surrender*. Jacob went down in history as the “prince with God” instead of the “supplanter” and “deceiver”; but it was *only* because he finally surrendered completely to God. He had been trying to bring God’s blessing into his life by his *own* means and efforts for the better part of 95 years; and even though God had prospered him materially, he knew, deep down inside, that things were not right between him and God. He probably could already see that most of his sons were turning into mean, selfish, rebels. They were already following his example of self-will and trickery. The guilt of his past was overshadowing him; and he feared that he was finally about to pay the price for his deceit. At that very moment, his brother was not far away, barrelling down on him with 400 armed men. Would God’s plan of redemption for mankind be annihilated because of his sin? Would the fragile bloodline of the Messiah be destroyed? He had nowhere to look but to his God. He had used up every last scheme of his own; and he now knew that he *must* have God’s blessing. He finally did what he should have done long before: he prayed. He *really* prayed, and surrendered his will fully to God.

Have *you* fully surrendered yourself to God, Christian? Of are you still trying to be in control of some parts of your life? You made Jesus the King of your life on the day you were saved; yet, do you often *act* as though *you* were the king? Do you just do things without even asking *Him* what to do? Are your loved ones suffering spiritually, or even perishing spiritually, because of your self-will, pride, anger, bitterness, or unforgiveness? God, in His mercy, may be blessing and protecting you to an extent, despite your self-will; but it doesn’t mean that all is well between you and God. (And you know it!) If you, like Jacob, need to have a heart-to-heart with God, please do it! Surrender your *all* to God today!

**Conclusion:** As we’ve examined the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob this morning, we have seen “the good, the bad, and the ugly” of their lives; but it seems that the “bad and ugly” is much too prominent. In coming weeks, we will see *much more* “bad and ugly” in the lives of their descendants. How could the Messiah be descended from such imperfect people, and still be sinless Son of God? Because Jesus’ birth was not like any other man’s birth. He had a human *mother*, but not a human father. The sin nature is passed down to us from Adam, through our fathers; but Jesus did not have a human father. God caused Mary to conceive miraculously in her womb; and that holy thing that was conceived in her was called the Son of God.

Nonetheless, it seems only right that the King of Israel would be descended from righteous people. Even at his best, Abraham, the “Friend of God,” was an unworthy sinner. Even at his best, Isaac, the “only begotten son” on Mount Moriah, was an unworthy sinner. Even at his best, Jacob, the “prince with God,” fell far short of the glory of God. Their wives fell far short, too. How could God have use these people? Well, that’s the wonder of redemption. God delights in taking unworthy sinners, saving them by His grace, washing their guilt away, and using them for His glory, in spite of their failures. Jesus didn’t come to call righteous people, because *none of us* is righteous. He came to call *sinners* to repentance. If you

have never been saved, I urge you to come to Jesus today. In your heart, cry out to Him. Admit that you can't save yourself, and that Jesus *can* save you; and ask Him to come into your heart, and be your King and Saviour. If you will do this, He *will* come in; and He *will* put you to work. I can tell you, from 38 years of experience, that there is no higher honour than being on the "King's business"!

Christian, perhaps you are not carrying out the King's business very well, because you need to *do business* with Him, and get some things right. Confess your sin, draw near to Him, and keep drawing closer every day. He is your very best Friend; and He wants to share His heart with you!